

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEED ACT (ESSA): How it Relates to Children in Foster Care

What is ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a federal law that replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and affords States greater flexibility. Provisions for foster care youth in Philadelphia will be implemented for the 2017-2018 school year.

What is the purpose of ESSA surrounding children in foster care?

ESSA enhances collaborative working relationships between the Children and Youth Agency in Philadelphia, which is the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to improve services and outcomes for students in foster care. The SDP is required to assign a point of contact that will coordinate and implement new policy.

What is the Foster Care Coordinator role at School District of Philadelphia?

Serves as the primary education link between the district and DHS for Best Interest Determinations, coordination of transportation, and enrollment/records transfers.

What are the relevant provisions under ESSA that affect children in foster care?

The SDP in collaboration with DHS will ensure the following:

- 1) A child in foster care will remain in their school of origin (school child is enrolled at time of placement), unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest to attend that school.
- 2) If a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.
- 3) The new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.
- 4) Transportation for children in foster care is provided with cost sharing possibilities

